



**Yolo County  
Resource Conservation District**

**Long Range Plan  
2002 – 2007**

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## Personnel

### Yolo County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors

Tom Muller	<i>Chairman</i>
Scott Stone	<i>Director</i>
Robert Becker	<i>Director</i>
Wyatt Cline	<i>Director</i>
James Mayer	<i>Director</i>
Dave Scheuring	<i>Associate Director</i>

### District Staff

Paul Robins	<i>Executive Director</i>
Jeanette Wrysinski	<i>Program Manager</i>
William Spong	<i>Water Quality Specialist</i>
Vance Howard	<i>Cache Creek Watershed Coordinator</i>
Katherine Laddish,	<i>Watershed Education Coordinator</i>
Jennifer Drewitz	<i>Vegetation Management Specialist</i>
Susan McCloud	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>

### USDA NRCS Woodland Field Office Staff

Phil Hogan	<i>District Conservationist</i>
John Weatherford	<i>Soil Conservationist</i>
Stephen Jaouen	<i>Range Conservationist</i>
Ha Truong	<i>Agricultural Engineer</i>

### Key Local Partners

Union School Slough Watershed Improvement Program Staff (Audubon California)  
FARMS Leadership, Inc.  
Cache Creek Watershed Stakeholders Group

## Mission Statement

The Yolo County RCD commits to protect, improve, and sustain the natural resources of Yolo County. The District employs a watershed approach that allows an integrated assessment of resource inputs, outputs, and impacts. We promote responsible stewardship by:

- *Demonstrating conservation practices through cooperative land users,*
- *Educating agencies and the public in resource conservation and enhancement,*
- *Sponsoring partnerships and networks, and*
- *Providing technical guidance and on-site expertise.*

## Introduction

The Yolo County Resource Conservation District covers over 500,000 acres (83%) of Yolo County, with terrain varying from 2,500' interior coast range peaks on the far west to valley floor gently sloping across most of the county to the Sacramento River on the east. Deep, alluvial soils support a healthy agricultural economy.

The District is a legal subdivision of the State of California, organized to support landowners with resource management solutions through partnerships with individuals, organizations and agencies. The District is guided by a five-member Board of Directors, which consists of local landowners, most of whom are farmers. Directors undertake conservation practices on their properties and work within the community to promote resource conservation.

To guide its planning efforts and projects, the District developed this Long-Range Plan to identify four Lines of Business with articulated goals, objectives and results. The District continues to implement this plan through partnerships with local landowners, organizations and agencies; through successful application for competitive grant funds; and through future acquisition of more stable funding resources as described in the associated District Financial Plan.

## District Lines of Business and Goals

### **Resource Assessment**—*monitoring of existing watershed resources and conservation effects*

1. Document the quality, quantity and status of the County's resource base with a watershed approach using maps and Geographical Information Systems.
2. Ensure local agencies are informed and understand the natural resources data of the region.

### **Land Treatment**—*demonstration projects and technical support for private and public conservation projects*

1. Develop and implement watershed stewardship practices in cooperation with the NRCS Field Office staff and other key partners.
2. Develop and implement or support watershed improvement programs within Yolo County.
3. Reduce barriers to local conservation.
4. Provide project review, implementation support and guidance for relevant County projects.

### **Education & Outreach**—*conservation education and communication*

1. Inform and motivate the public and its representatives with new ways of evaluating and solving resource problems and of the central role of farmers in resource conservation and enhancement.

2. Increase our contact and programs with local schools and educational organizations.

**Future Planning**—*Sustaining regional resources and District service/function*

1. Provide regional resource planning guidance to support long-term sustainability of county agricultural and natural resources
2. Serve the people and natural resources of Yolo County more effectively by building the financial health of the district.

**Implementation**

These goals are divided into objectives and results in the Long-Range Plan (detailed in the following pages with objectives and results). The District develops and operates programs to promote and carry out that plan through annual work plans. District plans and programs are designed and implemented with a watershed model and integrated resource management approach through demonstration, monitoring, and education. All District activities employ an adaptive management approach to allow on-going technique refinement to improve the results. The District uses voluntary, cooperative and scientifically-sound methods to ensure that the natural resources of the watersheds within the District are sustained, restored and protected within a landscape of production agriculture, growing cities, and wildlands.

All programs embrace volunteer, cooperating land users and community groups to develop partnerships and facilitate group action to maintain and restore the watersheds of Yolo County. While conservation work on private land is best done one landowner at a time, all partners collaborate to coordinate resources, maximize intended benefits, and minimize inter-project conflict.

Individual services to landowners, such as development of conservation plans and individual consultation, are provided primarily through USDA NRCS staff and cost-share/incentive programs, with direction from the District and assistance from District staff. District Programs may incorporate such services, but generally focus on demonstration projects, focused monitoring, and education to communicate new and old conservation techniques to landowners and the public. NRCS and District staff and directors provide leadership on local, regional and national land management and policy issues by partnering with other organizations, agencies, and forums concerned with resource management.

**Partnerships**

Other key partner organizations and agencies for implementation include:

- The Willow Slough Watershed Rangeland Stewardship Program, managed by Audubon California—providing landowner support for rangeland implementation of the Willow Slough Watershed Integrated Resources Management Plan and collaboration in field meeting presentations and investigation of incentives for conservation.
- FARMS Leadership, Inc., which manages both the FARMS Leadership Program and the SLEWS Program (Students and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship)—critical elements of the District's outreach efforts to local high school students.
- University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) specialists and farm advisors provide companion research and technical support to District staff.
- USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS)—the primary subcontractor for practice monitoring and development of the Yolo OnePlan under the Lower Union School Slough Watershed Improvement Program.

**RCD tool kit of critical watershed stewardship practices:**

- tailwater ponds
- hedgerows
- cover cropping
- sediment traps
- riparian vegetation projects
- range management
- irrigation water management
- roadside native grass establishment
- conservation tillage
- native plant hedgerows

## 2002-2007 Long-Range Plan

### Resource Assessment

Goal 1: Document the quality, quantity and status of the County's resource base with a watershed approach using maps and Geographical Information Systems.

Objective 1: Pursue funding and continue to document data on farm conservation practices and watershed health parameters. (Ongoing)

Products:

- Water quality analyses of conservation practices.
- Wildlife habitat benefit analyses of conservation practices.
- Economic cost and benefit analyses of conservation practices.
- Updates to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide practice application standards and specifications.
- Funding for watershed planning and assessment studies.
- Resource assessment components in every District project.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain GIS maps and database in cooperation with County and other partners. (Ongoing)

Products:

- GIS weed and native species layers developed with Yolo Co. Weed Management Area.
- GIS layer of District and other conservation projects in the county available to County of Yolo.
- Development of relevant resource component layers.
- District GIS maintained up-to-date and operational.
- Collaborative planning efforts with NRCS Customer Service Toolkit

Goal 2: Ensure that other local agencies are informed and understand the natural resources data of the region.

Objective 1: Exchange resource information between county individuals, groups and agencies. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Participation at District board meetings by representatives from other organizations.
- District Board representation at outside meetings.
- Executive Director meetings with other resource organization leaders.
- Annual Report presentation to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. (Every fall)
- Defined scope for a "State of the County's Natural Resources" report. (2006)

Objective 2: Maintain network of farmers and major landowners in the county, "people resources," and resource agencies who provide data for each listed objective. (Ongoing)

Products:

- Project collaboration and information exchange with other county resource managers.
- Up-to-date "resource people" list included in District mailing list.

## Land Treatment

Goal 1: Develop and implement watershed stewardship practices in cooperation with the NRCS Field Office staff and other key partners.

Objective 1: Continue and expand, as necessary, current methods for farmers & ranchers to include conservation practices regular operations. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- District Rice Roller Program with fall flyer announcements.
- Evaluation of the relevance of existing and developing conservation techniques for Yolo County resource management.
- Technical support for ranchers with native grass and stockpond fencing projects in cooperation with Audubon CA. (Through 2004)
- Prescribed burn program with YCWMA and Audubon CA. (Through 2004)
- Support requests for green waste and composting projects on farmland.
- Mobile Irrigation/Eco Lab in collaboration with local water districts. (Spring 2003 pending funding)
- Annual documentation of service to landowners by region and practice.
- Technical support for wetland proposals and review for consistency with county policies and existing watershed plans.
- Technical support for Yolo Basin Wildlife Area wildlife-friendly farming projects.
- Technical and fund-raising support for farmer implementation of conservation practices, especially near streams.
- Conservation implementation information to local farming groups throughout the District.
- Technical support and direction for NRCS staff as requested.

Goal 2: Develop and implement/support watershed improvement programs

Objective 1: Continue implementation of the *Willow Slough Watershed Integrated Resources Management Plan* through landowner support programs.

Products:

- Proposals for expanding implementation programs for ecosystem restoration within the Willow Slough Watershed. (Ongoing)

- Rangeland Water Quality Plan workshop held in the Willow Slough Watershed. (Spring 2003 or 2004)
- Technical support for the West Plainfield Flood Protection Area.

Objective 2: Support watershed planning and implementation efforts in other watersheds throughout the county. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Participation in implementation of the Colusa Basin plan.
- Completion and initial implementation of Watershed Plan for Capay Valley. (Spring 2004)
- Organizational meetings and proposals for integrated resource management within other District watersheds. (After fall 2003)
- Cooperation with all established watershed stakeholder groups in the County.

Goal 3: Explore incentives and challenges to local conservation

Objective 1: Explore new landowner incentives for conservation.

Products:

- Collaboration with Yolo Land Trust. (Ongoing)
- Evaluation of and proposal for low-interest loan program for cost-share participants in collaboration with Audubon CA. (Fall 2003)

Objective 2: Streamline bureaucratic and regulatory procedures affecting conservation in collaboration with Federal and State resource agencies

Products:

- Pilot landowner protection program with US Fish & Wildlife Service in Yolo County. (Spring 2004)

Goal 4: Provide project review, implementation support and guidance for relevant County projects

Objective 1: Collaborate with county agencies to develop and implement an Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) Program for Yolo County. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Support existing and stimulate new roadside projects.
- County Roadside Vegetation Permit program. (Fall 2002)
- Ongoing evaluation of the costs and benefits of IRVM projects and program.
- County Roadside Vegetation Management Policy that incorporates IRVM. (Spring 2004)

Objective 2: Support implementation of the Yolo County Weed Management Area Strategic Plan.

Products:



- Funding proposals submitted for implementation of YCWMA projects. (Ongoing)
- Weed Warrior on District staff available for County projects. (Through fall 2004)

Objective 3: Maintain and expand relationship with county to provide specialized services for conservation efforts, such as project commentary, water quality and vegetation management.

Products:

- Provide commentary on county projects as requested. (Ongoing)
- Presentation to county for project-based funding for District services on behalf of county resources. (spring 2003)

## Education & Outreach

Goal 1: Inform and motivate the public with new ways of evaluating and solving resource problems. Emphasize the central role of farmers in resource conservation and enhancement.

Objective 1: Expand public awareness to new ways of solving resource problems. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Periodic tours, news media contact (press releases), and articles in local newspapers.
- Quarterly newsletter with FSA and NRCS.
- Regular field meetings regarding conservation and restoration practices for farmers, agencies and the public.
- On-line conservation planning tool (OnePlan) for farmers and landowners. (Beta version in fall 2004)
- Contact with Board of Supervisors, officials, and legislators to give brief updates on the District's watershed and restoration programs.
- Annual Dinner.
- Updated District conservation education materials, such as brochures, guidebooks and videos. (Quarterly and as needed)
- Website updated monthly with program and event information.
- TV and radio coverage solicited for District special events.
- Farmer conservation case studies. (Quarterly)

Objective 2: Increase farmer appreciation of the benefits of conservation and encourage leadership with the District. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Director recruitment package and presentations. (Package by 2003)
- Expanded relationship with Yolo County Farm Bureau and other farm-service groups.
- Annual presentations to production agriculture commodity meetings in the county.

- New “practice pages” for conservation manual, website and OnePlan. (Quarterly)

Objective 3: Increase the number of active farm and ag supporters among urban population and environmental groups. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Presentations to local service clubs, city governments and environmental organizations on the District’s watershed and restoration programs.
- Proposal for a District volunteer program. (spring 2003)
- Educational booths at conferences, fairs, and professional meetings.
- Annual “Day in the District” tour for legislators and the public.
- Periodic technical support for city conservation projects

Goal 2: Increase our contact and programs with local schools and educational organizations.

Objective 1: Maintain and expand education program between the schools and the District. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Continued collaboration with FARMS Leadership Program
- District hosting of one SLEWS site per year.
- Student page on the District web site. (Fall 2003)
- Support and direction for school programs at the Midtown School garden site.

Objective 2: Continue to increase FFA leaders’ and local teachers’ awareness of ag/wildlife-friendly methods of farming and local ecosystem restoration.

Products:

- “Educators’ Field Day” coordinated with Yolo County Farm Bureau to include tour of District project sites. (summer 2003)
- One teacher serving as an Associate Director to the RCD Board. (summer 2003)
- Cooperation with the Explorit Science Center in Davis. (fall 2003)

## **Future Planning**

Goal 1: Provide regional resource planning guidance to support long-term sustainability of county agricultural and natural resources

Objective 1: Play an active role in maintenance and development of local, state, and federal conservation policy. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Papers, letters, and articles outlining developing and current public policy issues relevant to the District.
- Participation in local and statewide farmland protection efforts.
- Land Use Policy for the District. (summer 2004)

- Regular communication with the Yolo County Farm Bureau Land Use and Taxation Committee.
- Leadership for RC&D coverage in Yolo County.

Goal 2: Maintain the financial health of the district.

Objective 1: Maintain and increase the stability of the District's revenue stream. (Ongoing unless otherwise noted.)

Products:

- Development and implementation of District Financial Plan and Fundraising Plan. (Fall 2002)
- Increased funding from non-governmental sources. (Spring 2004)
- Schedule of billable rates for contracted work. (Fall 2002)
- Adequate overhead included in all funding to support District administrative and development activities.
- Presentations to county for project-based funding for the District.
- Evaluation of District incorporation of Yolo County cities. (Fall 2003)

Objective 2: Educate Local Legislators about the District's role in local resource solutions. (Ongoing)

Products:

- Day in the Capitol.
- Day in the District tours
- Regular communication with legislators.
- Annual Report to County Board of Supervisors.